

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Prior to the present communication, claims 1–33 were pending in the subject application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24 and 26–33 have been amended herein, claims 3, 14, and 25 have been cancelled, and claims 34–36 have been added. All claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for conditioning clinically related billing items, comprising:

an input interface configured to receive a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event; and

a conditioning engine, the conditioning engine communicating with the input interface to receive the unique-preliminary billing item and ~~generate a verification of the existence of~~ analyzing, as a condition precedent to transmitting the billing item to a paying party, the preliminary billing item by comparison against at least one mandatory documentation or affirming data elements against mandatory billing guidelines-guideline to determine compliance therewith, as a condition of transmitting the billing item from a billing entity wherein if the preliminary billing item is determined to comply with the at least one mandatory billing guideline, the conditioning engine is configured to transmit the preliminary billing item to the paying party.

2. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guidelines ~~comprise~~ guideline comprises at least one of a regulatory guideline and an administrative guidelines ~~guidelines~~ guideline.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim ~~4~~ 34, wherein the ~~compliance verification performed by the conditioning engine comprises~~ verifies the existence of the at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements by checking evidentiary support for the at least one of mandatory documentation ~~or and~~ affirming data elements against a compliance template.

5. (Original) A system according to claim 4, wherein the evidentiary support comprises at least clinical documentation, the clinical documentation comprising at least one of a patient chart, physicians orders, diagnostic codes, a history and physical record, a medication administration record, a set of progress notes, a treatment plan and a radiology report.

6. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein the conditioning engine communicates the preliminary billing item or data related to the preliminary billing item to a holds queue when the preliminary billing item is determined not to comply with the at least one mandatory billing guideline ~~verification against the mandatory billing guidelines is not initially satisfied~~.

7. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 6, wherein the preliminary billing item or the data related to the preliminary billing item is further reviewed for satisfaction of the at least one mandatory billing guidelines ~~guidelines~~ guideline while in the holds queue.

8. (Original) A system according to claim 7, wherein the further review comprises an automated search for additional clinical documentation.

9. (Original) A system according to claim 7, wherein the further review comprises an at least partly manual search for additional clinical documentation.

10. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guideline ~~is~~ is stored in a compliance database.

11. (Original) A system according to claim 10, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for conditioning clinically related billing items, comprising:

receiving a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event; ~~and~~
~~analyzing, generating a verification of the existence of mandatory~~
~~documentation or affirming data elements against mandatory billing guidelines as~~
~~a condition of precedent to~~ transmitting the preliminary billing item to a paying
party, the preliminary billing item by comparison against at least one mandatory
billing guideline to determine compliance therewith; and
if it is determined that the preliminary billing item complies with the at
least one mandatory billing guideline, transmitting the preliminary billing item to
the paying party.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guidelines ~~comprise~~ guideline comprises a regulatory guidelines ~~guideline~~.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~12~~ 13, ~~wherein the step of further comprising verifying the existence of the at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements by generating a verification comprises checking evidentiary support for the at least one of mandatory documentation or and affirming data elements against a compliance template.~~

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15, wherein the evidentiary support comprises at least clinical documentation, the clinical documentation comprising at least one of a patient chart, physicians order, diagnostic codes, a history and physical record, a medication administration record, a set of progress notes, a treatment plan and a radiology report.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12, further comprising a step of ~~communication~~ communicating the preliminary billing item or data related to the preliminary billing item to a holds queue when the compliance verification against the mandatory billing guidelines is not initially satisfied preliminary billing item is determined not to comply with the at least one mandatory billing guideline.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 17, further comprising a step of further reviewing the preliminary billing item or the data related to the preliminary billing item for satisfaction of the at least one mandatory billing ~~guidelines~~ guideline while in the holds queue.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the step of further reviewing comprises performing an automated search for additional clinical documentation.

20. (Original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the step of further reviewing comprises performing an at least partly manual search for additional clinical documentation.

21. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12, wherein the at least one mandatory billing ~~guidelines~~ guideline is stored in a compliance database.

22. (Original) A method according to claim 21, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ One or more computer-readable storage media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon that, when executed, perform a method for conditioning a clinically related billing item, the clinically related billing item being generated according to a method comprising:

receiving a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event; and

~~generating~~ analyzing, ~~a verification of the existence of mandatory~~

~~documentation or affirming data elements against mandatory billing guidelines as~~

a condition ~~of precedent~~ to transmitting the billing item to a paying party, the

preliminary billing item by comparison against at least one mandatory billing guideline to determine compliance therewith; and

if it is determined that the preliminary billing item complies with the at least one mandatory billing guideline, transmitting the preliminary billing item to the paying party.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guideline comprises a regulatory guideline.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim ~~23~~36, ~~wherein the step of~~further comprising verifying the existence of the at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements by generating a verification comprises checking evidentiary support for the at least one of mandatory documentation or and affirming data elements against a compliance template.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 26, wherein the evidentiary support comprises at least clinical documentation, the clinical documentation comprising at least one of a patient chart, physicians order, diagnostic codes, a history and physical record, a medication administration record, a set of progress notes, a treatment plan and a radiology report.

28. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the method further comprises a step of ~~communication~~communicating the preliminary billing item or data related to the preliminary billing item to a holds queue when the ~~compliance verification against the mandatory billing guidelines is not initially satisfied~~preliminary billing item is determined not to comply with the at least one mandatory billing guideline.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 28, wherein the method further comprises a step of further reviewing the preliminary billing item or the data related to the preliminary billing item for satisfaction of the at least one mandatory billing guidelines guideline while in the holds queue.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 29, wherein the step of further reviewing comprises performing an automated search for additional clinical documentation.

31. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 29, wherein the step of further reviewing comprises performing an at least partly manual search for additional clinical documentation.

32. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guidelines are guideline is stored in a compliance database.

33. (Currently Amended) ~~A clinically related billing item~~The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 32, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

34. (New) A system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guideline includes at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements.

35. (New) A method according to claim 12, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guideline includes at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements.

36. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the at least one mandatory billing guideline includes at least one of mandatory documentation and affirming data elements.